

# Paris is stunned after wave of terror attacks across the city

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff  
11.16.15

Word Count 955



1

People light candles at Republique Square in Paris, Nov. 15, 2015, after orchestrated terror attacks across the French capital on Nov. 13 left scores dead or injured. Photo: AP Photo/Daniel Ochoa de Olza

PARIS, France - Gunmen unleashed a coordinated wave of attacks in Paris, France, Friday night that left more than 132 people dead, more than 350 injured and generated scenes of horror. The French government declared a state of emergency and secured its borders in response.

Taken together, the assaults represented the deadliest day of attacks in France since World War II. It was one of the worst terror strikes on a Western country since Sept. 11, 2001, in New York. At half a dozen sites across Paris, attackers carried out suicide bombings, hurled grenades and shot hostages.

The killers targeted places throughout the city where tourists and residents were enjoying a typical Friday night. Soccer games, concerts and evening meals at cafes were all suddenly disrupted. The sounds of explosions and gunfire could be heard throughout the city.

Late into the night and early Saturday morning, heavily armed French security forces flooded the streets. Residents and tourists sought safety indoors.

## **French President Vows Revenge**

It was the second time this year that Paris has been a scene of mass murder. In January, Islamic extremists attacked the newspaper Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish-owned supermarket, leaving 17 dead. Charlie Hebdo was targeted because of cartoons it published of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.



The latest violence will only heighten tensions in Europe. The continent is already on edge from the strain of a huge flow of migrants from the Middle East, southern Asia and Africa. At the same time, Islamist extremism has been growing as some people have grown angry at governments in the Middle East and the West. European political leaders are in disagreement about how to handle the problems facing the continent.

World leaders rushed to condemn the Paris attacks, and French President François Hollande vowed revenge. "We are going to lead a war which will be pitiless," Hollande said.

"Because when terrorists are capable of committing such atrocities, they must be certain that they are facing a determined France, a united France, a France that is together and does not let itself be moved, even if today we express infinite sorrow."

## **Attack Planning Went Undetected**

Within minutes of the first reports on the violence, Islamic State supporters celebrated the atrocities online. They created Internet hashtags hailing "Paris in flames" and declaring that "ISIS is attacking Paris," the Vocativ website reported.

3

The Islamic State is an extremist group, also known as ISIS. It wants to start its own country under Islamic law. Its fighters have taken over parts of Syria. Some of northern and western Iraq is also under its control.

On Saturday, Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks, and Hollande went on television to blame the group.

The attacks required extensive coordinating. The scale of which will prompt questions about how the planning for such an operation was not detected by French intelligence services.

The French government at first announced that all eight of the attackers had been killed. Yet on Sunday, French police said that while six attackers had detonated explosives and one was shot and killed by police, an eighth was urgently being sought.

## Gunfire, Explosions In Concert Hall

The scene of the worst bloodshed was the 19th-century Bataclan concert hall, one of the city's most famous music venues. About 1,000 people had gathered there for a show by an American rock band.

As attacks took place elsewhere in the city, gunmen stormed the music hall. Witnesses said three or four men, clad in black, used assault rifles to shoot audience members.

Police surrounded the building as explosions and gunfire could be heard. The police moved in. As they did so, the attackers blew themselves up with explosive belts, police said. Inside, officers found some 100 people dead, the city's deputy mayor, Patrick Klugman, said.

Government workers guided survivors, wrapped in gold-colored heat blankets, down the street to waiting buses. Several had blood spattered on their clothing. Some cried. Most declined to talk with reporters.

4

## **President Hollande Declares State Of Emergency**

At other sites across the city, attacks left dozens more dead.

At the soccer match, terrified fans streamed on to the field. Police kept them from leaving after suicide bombers detonated explosives outside the stadium. The blasts near the stadium prompted authorities to evacuate Hollande. The president was among thousands watching a friendly match between France and Germany.

Across Paris, normal city life came to an abrupt halt. Subway lines were shut down, and authorities advised residents to stay indoors. People who had been on the street in areas near the attacks fled in a panic.

Hollande went on national television Friday night to announce a state of emergency. France will beef-up security at its borders and send 1,500 army troops to Paris to back up police.

Late on Sunday, France's Defense Ministry said French warplanes had launched a ferocious retaliatory assault on targets in Raqqa, Syria, the Islamic State's de facto capital, after coordinating with U.S. defense officials. The ministry said 10 aircraft dropped 20 bombs on facilities used by the militant group.

5

## **President Obama Says U.S. Stands With France**

The border controls came as Europe's tradition of free movement between countries is at risk of ending. Despite rules for passport-free travel, Sweden began border checks this week to better control the migrant crisis. Slovenia rolled out razor wire on its border with Croatia.

6

While the new French border controls were expected to be strict, international airlines and trains were still operating.

In Washington, President Barack Obama offered condolences to the French people and promised U.S. help "to bring these terrorists to justice."

He said the wave of violence was not just an assault on France. Obama called it "an attack on all of humanity and the universal values we share."

